

SCENERY AND THE STAGE.

Her Majesty's Theatre.—The great theatre in the Haymarket, which, as we have before said, presents one of the most successful pieces of theatrical decoration in London, has been thoroughly renovated, and looks as well as it did when first completed: the gold-coloured hangings have been refreshed, and the pictures which filled the panels of the ceiling, proscenium, and drop-scene, have been cleaned and strengthened, so that our foreign and provincial visitors will see it in its best aspect. A brilliant season is of course expected, and Mr. Lumley has made his arrangements to be equal to the occasion. In a new ballet produced on the opening night, called "*L'Île des Amours*," Mr. C. Marshall has given some very brilliant scenery: the effects and groupings, such as Watteau painted, are also good. The first scene is of practical attainment,—a pleasant place by the river's side, with its church, and trees, and houses, such as one meets with on the Rhine or the Moselle; the last is a bower of roses, more bright and beautiful than one finds in the world, but none the less pleasant to look at. The rain was pouring mercilessly out of doors, and we were grateful for a little sunlight, justifying pink and white satin for peasant's wear. Mons. Van de Weyer lamented the other night that we did not transfer the architecture of our stage to our streets: it would be very desirable at the same time to transfer the atmosphere and climate.

Diorama of a Tour through Europe.—As we have mentioned Mr. Marshall's name, we will take the opportunity to say that great improvement has been effected in the lighting and management of his large moving Diorama at her Majesty's Concert-room, Haymarket, already previously described by us with commendation. Here, truly, more than

"Fancy, like the finger of the clock,
Runs the great circuit, and is still at home."

Here are the places themselves in their true similitude, some of them from daguerotypes, and the others from sketches on the spot. It forms at once an instructive and charming exhibition.

The Vanbrugh Club.—"When the drama has flourished, so have the sister fine arts, especially architecture." The club of young architects and others who have taken this sentence from the chair of the Academy for their motto, Vanbrugh for their godfather, and once in the year don the sock and buskin to show their powers of assumption, good memory, and facility of utterance, gave a performance at the Soho Theatre on the 20th. The pieces selected were Jerrold's "*Bees Nest*," "*Time tries All*," and "*The Critic*,"—the first, a professional joker might say,—making a reason for the selection,—because the hero was a Bath brick; the second, with an eye to the houses of some speculative builders; and the third, because architects are not usually very fond of having it played by other people. All the pieces were very creditably acted,—"*Time tries All*," in particular; and to two or three of the performers individually, stronger praise might with justice be given.

The Adelphi Theatre, Strand.—The new drama here, "*The Disowned*,"—a stirring romance in three volumes, with all the Adelphi effects: there are some very truthful interiors. The last scene, too,—a wood-road by moonlight—is very effective.

THE OLD POOL BRIDGE, LIVERPOOL.—The Old Pool Bridge, which formerly crossed the Pool of Liverpool, has been recently examined during some excavations by the gas company. It consists of a single arch of about 12 feet span, semi-circular in form, and of two orders, and is built of coarse yellow sandstone. This bridge was built by Lord Molyneux in 1673, to the road across the common, and is now short of the centre of Liverpool. The Pool, a small river and estuary running from the Mersey (all long since built over) was filled up within the memory of persons still living. The bridge is now about three feet below the surface of the street.

FIRES IN CRAZY CHIMNEYS.

ANOTHER fire, through the improper construction of chimney flues, very nearly destroyed Gunnersbury-house, a few days ago. It appears that timbers in close contact with the flues had become ignited, and that, as is the case with one-half of the accidental fires, the flames burst forth when least expected, after the fire in the chimney had been extinguished.

In the erection of chimney shafts even of new houses, very rarely is sufficient attention paid to the laying of bricks with mortar in compact courses, and when the workmanship is least faulty, the mode of fixing dressings and fittings in wood is extremely reprehensible: while the work is green the carpenter follows on with floorings and skirtings, drives plugs into the chimney-breast to take his nails, lays trimmers on close to the wall (never more than 9 inches and often only 4 inches in thickness), and completes his flooring also up to the brickwork. Hence it happens that the plugs so driven form an aperture and frequently force off the plaster (or papering) within the shaft.

The new mode of sweeping flues with whale-bone brooms protruded up the shaft, soon abrades any loose particles; and the frequent recurring raps of the iron joints by which the cane rod is connected, lays bare the bricks and prepares the flue, already roughened within, for the adhesion of a dense sooty concrete: in this state, when a chimney accidentally becomes ignited (and it is then a happy accident if the wooden plugs, by this time pretty inflammable, or dried to touchwood, do not lend their aid as occult and dizzy incendiaries) away goes the structure like oil and flax.

Old houses are notoriously ill-constructed as regards these particulars: all the defects before noticed are found in them; and, moreover, the venerable usage of laying beams of timber directly across chambers having a bearing on the brickwork of the chimney-breast and after exposing the end flush with the inner surface or parge of the shaft, perhaps a corbel, or as the masons call them (very properly in this case), a cobbler, is laid in the wall for its support; but the chimney end is exposed some the less to danger, and there is no builder who (having extensive practice) has not pulled down old houses with beams charred and part consumed, showing that the fire has so reached them through the above-mentioned crevices, and that the safety of the building was due to the absence of the atmospheric air alone. There is also in old buildings danger to be apprehended from the plugs driven for the adjustment of wainscot paneling, now grown into disuse; and the covering or casing with canvas and paper these livings and decorations of antiquity, though it may mislead one not critical in this respect, adds nothing to security.

Striken the wall, it sounds like a drum, for it is a hollow device, and when the fire comes the sound, or the canvas, will increase the fury.

Even in old houses all this can be remedied: all wooden skirtings should be severed from the breasts of chimneys: the whole space, in central stories, for 3 or 4 feet on either side of a fireplace, is a series of flues almost as close as the pipes of an organ: a fire in any one of these endangers the skirting, floor, and house; therefore every plug should be withdrawn, and the chimboes be carefully filled with cement: the hearthstones should be mended, and the entire range searched lest any beam or trimmer come in contact with the fluey screen of brick, which only seems to be a solid wall: then a coating of house's cement should be laid on, and in that material the skirting could be worked out conformably to the pattern of the remainder of the room.

As to the wainscot, if any there be, it ought to be wholly removed from the face of chimneys.

With respect to the divisions between flues, which are by Act of Parliament qualified of 4 inches only, it is a question if that be enough to withstand the case, rain, and brash, and when steam-engines and furnaces are taken into connection flues, these are manifestly insufficient. The

recent method of constructing chimney shafts in new houses by the use of the tubular flue in terra cotta or ironstone pottery wears deserves consideration: each length runs about 20 or 24 inches: fitted as joint and socket they form an incombustible pipe, extending from the fire-place to the top of the chimney; and, as no thick lodgment of soot can adhere to the smooth surface, although such a flue take fire, it will burn out before a dead heat can be generated, and timbers even in contact with it will escape unscathed. The extreme facility for cleansing, and the improved draught, make the tubular shaft by far the better on all accounts. We have heard it objected to them that the soot falls, and should be glad to have information on this point. New Buckingham Palace, and many of the mansions and hospitals erected within the last three or four years, have adopted them.

NEW CONGREGATIONAL CHAPEL.
ST. MARY CRAY, KENT.

A new congregational chapel is now being erected at St. Mary Cray, Kent, from the designs of Mr. R. M. Philpott.

The plan consists of two towers connected by an arcaded porch, the staircases to galleries being placed immediately behind, and entered through the inner sides of each tower. The chapel in the clear is 66 feet long by 44 feet wide, and is lighted entirely by a dome of cast-iron 46 feet long by 26 feet wide, glazed with ground glass in 44-inch lengths bent to the curve of the dome. The weight of the glass is 30 ounces to the foot. To avoid the unsightliness of the interior of the dome being intersected by the beams and principals, the whole roof weighing, with the dome, upwards of 25 tons, is carried by a double pair of trussed principals 47 feet apart, connected by double purline also trussed, their ends resting on saddle-shoes of cast-iron.

The galleries are also entirely carried by double guides trussed with 2-inch rods, and are capable of seating nearly 300 persons. The total accommodation provided is about 900 sittings. The ground floor is benched throughout, and has a row of ten carved stalls at the north and south side of the eastern end. The pulpit, entered through a semi-circular archway in the eastern wall, is carved in oak. The passage ways are laid with black and red tiles, and the building is heated by hot water.

The walls and ceiling are intended ultimately to be adorned with paintings.

The exterior is faced with squared flints laid in courses, and is almost the first attempt of any consequence to adapt this material to an Italian structure. The dressings are of Caen stone.

The whole has been built at the sole expense of Mr. W. Johnson, the well-known paper maker, at a cost of about 5,000*l.* Mr. John Goodwin, of Loxwood, is the contractor.

When we say that over the porch there is a Venetian window, and that the side towers, crowned with a cornice and balustrade, have two stories of dwellinghouse windows, it will be seen that the external appearance of the building is domestic rather than ecclesiastical.

AN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION OF INDUSTRIALS.—A "delegate from the Industrial Congress of New York," Mr. Parsons E. Day, gives notice that there is to be a World's Convention of Mechanics and Working Men held in London, during the Fair of 1851, for the purpose of effecting an interchange of opinions in relation to the state of labour and the condition of the working classes in all parts of the world.

LIVERPOOL ARCHITECTURAL SOCIETY.—At a meeting of the society, last week, Mr. Pictor in the chair, Mr. Styrpe contributed the paper of the evening, pointing out "the objects and advantages of the study of archaeology," which gave rise to an animated discussion, in which the Chairman, Mr. Reed, Mr. Boulton, and Mr. H. P. Horner took part. Mr. Reed announced that the next subject for the students' design was a roadside inn, in the Italian style, to be sent in that day month.